

University Food Service Workers Vote to Join UFCW Local 1000



Texas Christian University food service workers voted to join UFCW Local 1000.

More than 150 Sodexo food service workers at Texas Christian University (TCU) voted to have a union voice on the job Monday night and join UFCW Local 1000. According to the workers, the vote was motivated by a change in Sodexo company policy that resulted in roughly 70 percent of TCU dining employees losing benefits such as health care coverage, vacation time, and sick leave.

Sodexo redefined full-time employment terms for workers last fall. When the change took effect, many full-time Sodexo workers at TCU became or were reclassified as part-time workers, effectively losing benefits they previously had as full-time employees.

During the campaign, Sodexo workers had support not only from UFCW Local 1000 members, but TCU students as well. Some students and student groups on campus actively voiced support for the workers' right to join a union, including the campus chapter of the NAACP.

Negotiations for the workers are set to begin soon. **OP**

Labor Organizers Attend UFCW and AFL-CIO Organizing Institute's First Joint Organizer Training

More than two dozen UFCW organizers hailing from Locals 7R, 23, 371, 400, 1459, 1500, the UFCW International, and RWDSU, participated in the first joint UFCW/AFL-CIO new organizer training program held at the United Steelworkers headquarters in Pittsburgh, Penn., from March 13-16.



Nearly 45 organizers participated in the first joint UFCW/AFL-CIO new organizer training program.

The joint training with the AFL-CIO was part of a ten-day new organizer training designed by the UFCW to encompass a body of knowledge, including labor history, social media, one-on-one communication, comprehensive campaigns, health and safety, community organizing strategies, organizing and the law, Right to Work, along with a field component which provided the new organizers with the opportunity to gain hands on experience on ongoing organizing campaigns - Giant Eagle, IKEA, and the Steelworkers' Adjunct faculty campaign.

"As a member organizer, I was very happy to come to this training to learn some valuable skills to help organize in my local," said Local 400 member organizer Stephanie Pryor. "Helping the Steelworkers in their campaign to organize adjunct faculty taught me that whether you are a cashier at Walmart or a university professor, precarious conditions exist everywhere and the only way to fix things is by coming together in a union."

Ron Oswald, the general secretary of the International Union of Food Workers (IUF), and UFCW International Vice President Mark Lauritsen addressed the new UFCW organizers and emphasized the importance of union density in securing strong contracts for UFCW members. Ron Oswald shared his experience in working to secure global framework agreements at the international level and the critical role that organizing in the U.S. plays in increasing leverage during negotiations.

Participants in the joint training also heard from Leo Gerard, President of the United Steelworkers, who conveyed the urgency to organize at this critical juncture of the history of the labor movement in our country.

Nearly 45 organizers took part in the joint training. Organizers from AFL-CIO affiliates and other organizations who participated included the AFT, USW, Working America, the American Federation of Musicians, IBEW, IATSE, the Seven Mountains Central Labor Council and Fight Back Pittsburgh. **OP**

JBS Beef Plant Food Service Workers Say "Yes" to a Union Voice and Join UFCW Local 1776



Compass Group USA food service workers at the JBS beef plant in Souderton, Penn. have voted to join the UFCW to improve their working conditions. They join more than 1,000 of their co-workers who are already have a union voice on the job with UFCW Local 1776.



UFCW Local 653 and 1189 members met with their legislators in St. Paul, Minn., to talk about increasing the minimum wage and other issues important to working families.

Legislators themselves were happy to see UFCW members throughout the capitol. Representative John Marty felt that UFCW's presence would go a long way towards ensuring an increase in the minimum wage.

"We need working families to speak up on minimum wage and once we get that victory we have to keep going further. UFCW members being here push that train forward. Without you, it doesn't move."

"I thought the day was a huge success," said Diana Tastad, a UFCW Local 1189 member who has worked at Kowalski's for four years. "Legislators are too often out of touch with working people. They need to hear stories about not being able to feed our children. They don't know what it's like to go to bed hungry. The companies we work for spend money on lobbyists and are here all the time. We don't have that money, but we have our voice, that's our power. We can't not show up." **OP**

UFCW Members in Minnesota Lobby Their Legislators

Last week, members from UFCW Locals 653 and 1189 talked with their Representatives at the State Capitol in St. Paul, Minn. The members lobbied for increasing the minimum wage, for the passage of paid sick leave, and medical cannabis laws.

UFCW Local 1189 member Dave Vasquez, who works on the kill floor at Dakota Premium, was happy to be sharing his concerns with legislators.

"It's important for Representatives to hear from their constituents. Workers and regular people need to be talking to them because that's who puts them into power and feels the most impact from these laws. Coming to the capitol helps us make our case and make some positive changes."

Jillian Roemer, a UFCW Local 1189 member was particularly interested in talking with legislators about the importance of paid sick leave.

"I've done the math and I've lost \$240 from being sick just this year. The times I got sick were usually from someone coming to work sick and infecting me. It's incredibly frustrating. If it's affecting me, it's affecting others. In the service industry, paid sick leave should be a no brainer."

UFCW Local 1428 Members Lobby Legislators in Sacramento

On March 18th, UFCW Local 1428 members traveled to Sacramento, Calif., to speak with legislators at the State Capitol about bills working families would like to see passed in California.

They lobbied on AB 1792 and AB 1522.

AB 1792 would require the Department of Finance to prepare an annual report highlighting which large companies in California have workers on public assistance programs like food stamps and Medi-Cal.



UFCW Local 1428 members traveled to Sacramento, Calif., to speak with legislators at the State Capitol about bills working families would like to see passed in their state.

These programs were designed to help workers through tough times, not as a permanent subsidy to low-wage employers. This report would be used to inspire legislative action against large corporations like Walmart that are failing to pay their workers a living wage and forcing them to turn to the government for help.

AB 1522 would guarantee paid sick leave for every worker in California. This bill would ensure workers who become sick are given the time they deserve to get better.

“I was amazed to find out all the work my local does in politics,” said Peggy Macias who works at Food 4 Less. “So much of the work they do to pass laws that benefit workers in California we just take for granted. This experience made me realize why it’s so important that everyone is signed up to contribute to ABC.”

“This was my first trip to the capitol. I have always wanted to be more involved with my union and this trip opened my eyes to what all my union does,” said Myishia Carter who works at Stater Bros. “The trip was educational, exciting, and made me feel like I was making a difference. The entire day inspired me to be more involved. I am a new union steward and can’t wait to go back to my store and tell everyone about my experience and how much I learned.”

UFCW Local 1428 members said they would continue to push their elected officials to support workers in California. **OP**

UFCW and IUF Hold Global Heinz Meeting to Protect Union Workers Around the World



The UFCW hosted an IUF meeting to bring together union representatives and members in order to help protect Heinz workers from around the world.

The UFCW hosted an IUF meeting in Pittsburgh, Penn., bringing together union representatives and members that represent Heinz workers from around the world, including those from UFCW International, UFCW Canada, UFCW locals 17a, 75, and 431, and the RWDSU. The delegation joined together to make plans to work in solidarity on a global effort to protect all union Heinz workers and their jobs as Heinz seeks to reduce costs and increase profits at the expense of workers through wage cuts, layoffs, and plant closures.

Despite earning profits, Heinz has decreased their workforce by almost 25 percent in the past ten years, mostly through plant closures and layoffs. The corporate trend of reducing operational costs at the expense of workers continued when 3G Capital and Berkshire Hathaway purchased Heinz last year. Heinz recently closed the plant in Leamington, Canada, leaving nearly 800 full-time employees and members of UFCW Local 459 out of work.

The delegation will continue to work together and campaign to protect workers and their jobs at Heinz. **OP**

Walmart Workers and Allies Hold Panel on Inequality in America

Recently, 20 Walmart workers and their allies attended The State of Inequality in America panel discussion in Washington, D.C. The panelists discussed the growing gap between rich and poor in America, developed strategies to overcome



The State of Inequality in America panel held in Washington, D.C., had Walmart workers and community allies discuss the growing gap between the rich and poor in America.

the narrative that poverty is deserved, and pointed to worker action as the single strongest way to address the challenges facing working people. The panel also helped kick off a full-day Making Change at Walmart strategy meeting the following day.

The panelists agreed that the courage of low-wage workers has created an opportunity for change this year. As workers flanked the stage at the closing of the panel, one panelist told the group, “Walmart workers are leading this movement and that changes what’s possible.”

Over the course of the last two years, workers throughout the U.S. have been protesting, striking, and standing up for justice. Their actions have exposed a crisis of income inequality in America today.

Workers and their communities are increasingly frustrated that the profits they generate through hard work are enriching Wall Street and corporations - the largest among them Walmart - while working people face poverty and economic insecurity.

The panel was hosted by Roosevelt Institute Fellow and Columbia University Assistant Professor Dorian Warren. Other panelists included Representative Donna Edwards of Maryland’s 4th District, Working America Executive Director Karen Nussbaum, Color of Change Executive Director Rashad Robinson, Demos Senior Policy Analyst Amy Traub, Colorado OUR Walmart member Barbara Gertz and National Organization for Women Executive Director Terry O’Neill. **OP**

Ten-State “Give America a Raise” Bus Tour Begins

Since 2009, the price of food, gas, utilities, and basic necessities has been rising. In that same period of time, the federal minimum wage has stayed exactly the same. Because of this, workers across the country are struggling now more than ever to make ends meet. \$7.25 an hour simply isn’t enough. It’s time for Congress to give America a raise to \$10.10.

The “Give America a Raise” bus tour will be traveling through ten states to call on Congress to raise the minimum wage.

Several tour stops will take place outside the offices of members of Congress who are opposing a minimum wage increase and will feature high profile speakers, including U.S. Senators, candidates for statewide office, Secretary of Labor Tom Perez, and AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka.

For more information and to get involved at a tour stop near you, go to www.raiseto1010.com.

“Give America a Raise” Bus Tour Route:

- **March 25th:** Nashua, N.H.
- **March 26th:** Corning, N.Y. - Binghamton, N.Y. - Reading, Penn.
- **March 27th:** Philadelphia, Penn. - Pittsburgh, Penn.
- **March 28th:** Cleveland, Ohio - Columbus, Ohio
- **March 31st:** Chicago, Ill. - Milwaukee, Wis. - Rockford, Ill.
- **April 1st:** Springfield, Ill. - Louisville, Ky.
- **April 2nd:** Charleston, W. Va.
- **April 3rd:** Leesburg, Va. - Washington, D.C. **OP**